United Nations ST/IC/2010/18

Secretariat

18 June 2010

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff at Headquarters

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **Language proficiency examinations, October 2010**

1. The purpose of the present circular is to invite applications from staff members who wish to take the language proficiency examination in any of the six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), in accordance with the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/1999/2, section 3.

2. The purpose of the examination is to test staff members' written and spoken knowledge of the language. Staff members who pass one or more examinations may qualify for language-related incentives.

3. The examinations are open to staff members who:

(a) Were admitted to participate in a United Nations language course and have completed the highest level of that course;

(b) Have not completed a United Nations language course but can document that they possess an equivalent knowledge of the language in which they wish to be tested. They will be requested to provide full details about their language acquisition in their application.

4. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners, and applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. **The Board's decisions are final.**

5. The examination consists of a written and an oral component. The written examination consists of a composition and a series of multiple-choice questions covering listening comprehension, reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar. The total time for the written examination is 3 hours 10 minutes. The schedule for the 2010 written examinations is as follows:

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 30 June 2011.

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Tuesday, 19 October 2010

Chinese ..... 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

English ..... 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Russian ..... 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Wednesday, 20 October 2010

Arabic ..... 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

French ..... 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Spanish ..... 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Candidates are advised to arrive at least 30 minutes before the start of the examination in order to allow for sign-in procedures.

6. The use of a dictionary or any other reference material will not be permitted during either the written or the oral part of the examination. Similarly, candidates may not use personal computers to prepare their papers.

7. The test is a paper-based test; each examinee will be provided with an answer sheet prior to the beginning of the test. The answer sheet consists of two double-sided pages, on which examinees will record their answers to both parts of the written examination. Examinees are advised to strictly follow the instructions given prior to the test and are urged to familiarize themselves with the system of filling in the answer sheet prior to the test. To this effect, a sample blank answer sheet and properly filled-in answer sheet are posted at www.un.org/exam/lpe.

8. Staff members applying for the examination(s) may register by sending a completed registration form (P.310) during the registration period (**21 June 2010 to 23 July 2010**) by internal e-mail to: Language Proficiency Examination in New York/NY/UNO or by external e-mail to: unlpeny@un.org. Registration forms are available through iSeek, under Quicklinks/Forms/Language.

9. Applications received after the above-mentioned deadline will **not** be considered. To the extent possible, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their application as soon as possible. Incomplete applications will **not** be considered.

10. The location at Headquarters where each written examination will be held will be posted at a later stage, as follows:

(a) On the Language Proficiency Examinations website (www.un.org/exam/lpe);

(b) As an announcement on iSeek;

(c) Outside the classrooms on the 2nd floor of the DC2 building.

Candidates should check the Language Proficiency Examinations website (www.un.org/exam/lpe) for last-minute changes in room assignments.

11. The oral examination will consist of a one-on-one 15-minute interview. Examinees will be given interview appointments at the time of the written examination, right before entering the examination room. Examinees will not be allowed to change interview appointments, except for compelling reasons.

12. Requirements for passing the language proficiency examination:

(a) A minimum score of 65 per cent in both parts is required for a passing grade. If an examinee receives a score of 80 per cent or more on the written examination but fails the oral, the jury adjudicating the examination will review the case and may allow the candidate to retain his or her written score for the following examination session. In this event, the candidate will receive written notification of the jury's decision and will be required to apply to retake the oral examination at the following session only;

(b) Examinees who receive 80 per cent or more on the oral part but fail the written part and candidates who have taken only one part of the examination at one session will be required to retake both the written and oral parts at a subsequent session.

13. Examinees will receive written notification of their examination results. No results will be available prior to the official release date.

14. Copies of sample examinations can be obtained at www.un.org/exam/lpe.